retrieving from a database accessible by the computer a plurality of samples of words or parts representing different possible pronunciations of the selected one or more characters and displaying the retrieved samples;

allowing the user to select one of the displayed samples; and

storing first pronunciation data comprising the string of characters with the selected one or more characters being assigned the pronunciation associated with the sample selected by the user.

2.   (Amended)   The method of claim 1 further comprising generating a pronunciation of the character string using the pronunciation represented by the sample selected by the user as the pronunciation for the selected one or more characters, and audibly outputting the generated pronunciation.

3.   (Amended)   The method of claim 2, further comprising allowing the user to select another of the displayed samples after audibly outputting the generated pronunciation.

4.   (Amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising allowing the user to select a second of the displayed samples and storing second pronunciation data comprising the string of characters with the selected one or more characters being assigned the pronunciation represented by the second sample selected by the user.

5.   (Amended)   The method of claim 4, further comprising, during at text-to-speech process of generating audible output of a text file containing the string of characters, selecting one of the first and second pronunciation data.

6.   (Amended)   The method of claim 5, further comprising associating the first and second pronunciation data with first and second objects, respectively, and selecting one of the first and second objects, and wherein the step of selecting one of the first and second pronunciation data comprises selecting the pronunciation data associated with the selected object.

7.   (Amended)   The method of claim 4, further comprising, during a speech recognition process, recognizing a pronunciation of the string of characters by a user and selecting one of the first and second pronunciation data which most closely matches the recognized pronunciation.

8.   (Amended)   The method of claim 7, further comprising associating the first and second pronunciation data with first and second objects, respectively, and selecting one of the first and second objects which is associated with the selected pronunciation data.

9.   (Amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising allowing the user to identify a part of the character string as a separate syllable, and wherein the step of storing the first pronunciation data comprises storing data representing the identified separate syllable.

10.   (Amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising allowing the user to identify a part of the character string to associate with an accent, and wherein the step of storing the first pronunciation data comprises storing data representing the identified accent.

11.   (Amended)   The method of claim 1, wherein said character string is received as input from the user.

12.   (Amended)   The method of claim 1, wherein said character string is selected by the user from a dictionary database accessible to the computer.

13.   (Amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising allowing the user to select a preferred language and wherein the step of retrieving the samples representing possible pronunciations of the selected one or more characters comprises selecting a database for the preferred language from a plurality of language databases and retrieving the samples from the selected database.

14.   (Amended)   The method of claim 13, further comprising allowing the user to select a second language for the selected one or more characters and retrieving additional word samples from a second database corresponding to the selected second language.

15.   (Amended)   An articles of manufacture comprising a computer readable medium storing program code for, when executed, causing a computer to perform a graphical user interface method for allowing a user to set a pronunciation of a string of characters, the method comprising:

      allowing the user to select one or more characters in the string;

      retrieving from a database accessible by the computer a plurality of samples of words or parts of words representing different possible pronunciations of the selected one or more characters and displaying the retrieved samples;

      allowing the user to select one or the displayed samples; and

storing first pronunciation data comprising the string of characters with the selected one or more characters being assigned the pronunciation associated with the sample selected by the user.

16.   (Amended)   The article of claim 15, wherein the program code further causes the computer to generate a pronunciation of the character string using the pronunciation represented by the sample selected by the user as the pronunciation for the selected one or more characters, and audibly output the generated pronunciation.

17.   (Amended)   The article of claim 16, wherein the program code further causes the computer to allow the user to select another of the displayed samples after audibly outputting the generated pronunciation.

18.   (Amended)   The article of claim 15, wherein the program code further causes the computer to allow the user to select a second of the displayed samples and storing second pronunciation data comprising the string of characters with the selected one or more characters being assigned the pronunciation represented by the second sample selected by the user.

19.   (Amended)   The article of claim 18, wherein the program code further causes the computer, during a text-to-speech process of generating audible output of a text file containing the string of characters, to select one of the first and second pronunciation data.

20.   (Amended)   The article of claim 19, wherein the program code further causes the computer to associate the first and second pronunciation data with first and

second objects, respectively, and select one of the first and second objects, and wherein the step of selecting one of the first and second pronunciation data comprises selecting the pronunciation data associated with the selected object.

21.   (Amended)   The articles of claims 18, wherein the program code further causes the computer, during a speech recognition process, to recognize a pronunciation of the string of characters by a user and select one of the first and second pronunciation data which most closely matches the recognized pronunciation.

22.   (Amended)   The article of claim 21, wherein the program code further causes the computer to associate the first and second pronunciation files with first and second objects, respectively, and select one of the first and second objects which is associated with the selected pronunciation record.

23.   (Amended)   A graphical user interface system for allowing a user to modify a pronunciation of a string of characters, the system comprising:
         a dictionary database stored on a memory device comprising a plurality of first character strings and associated pronunciation records;
         a pronunciation database stored on a memory device comprising a plurality of second character strings each comprising one or more characters and each associated with a plurality of words, each word having one or more characters which are pronounced in the word in substantially identical fashion to one manner in which the associated second character string may be pronounced;
         an input/output system for allowing a user to select one of the first character strings from the dictionary database, to select one or more characters from the selected string, and to select one of the words in the pronunciation database; and

-6-

a programmable controller for generating pronunciation data comprising the selected first character string with the selected one or more characters being assigned the pronunciation associated with the word selected from the pronunciation database by the user.